AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1.   (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus which acquires coded data of a plurality of images from an external recording medium, wherein the coded data is hierarchically encoded data of the plurality of images, the apparatus comprising:

an input interface which receives signals from the external recording medium;

an image input controller which acquires the coded data by said input interface first only at a first level of hierarchical encoding from the external recording medium over the plurality of images;

a decoder which decodes the coded data acquired by said image input controller; **[[and]]**

a storage device which stores data decoded by said decoder;

an index maker which makes an index image of the plurality of images based on the data at the first level of hierarchical encoding on the plurality of images; and

a print engine which prints the index image received from said index maker;

wherein the image input controller receives data at a second level of hierarchical encoding for each of the plurality of images after data acquisition of the data at the first level of hierarchical encoding is completed and during decoding of the data at the first level of hierarchical encoding outputting of the index image, and wherein the first level includes a lower resolution than the second level.

2.   (Previously Presented) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first level of hierarchical encoding is the lowest level.

3.   (Canceled)

4.   (Canceled)

5.   (Currently Amended) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

~~an index maker which makes an index image of the plurality of images based on the data at the first level of hierarchical encoding on the plurality of images;~~

~~a print engine which prints the index image received from said index maker;~~

an operational device which instructs to make an index to said index maker; and

a controller which allows to activate said index maker when instructed by said operational device after data acquisition of the data at the first level of hierarchical encoding is completed.

6.   (Canceled)

7.   (Previously Presented) The image processing apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising a display device which displays a state of data acquisition of the coded data divided by the levels of hierarchical encoding.

8.   (Canceled)

9.   (Currently Amended) An image processing method for acquiring coded data of a plurality of images from an external recording medium, wherein the coded data is hierarchically encoded data of the plurality of images, the method comprising:

acquiring the coded data first only at a first level of hierarchical encoding from the external recording medium over the plurality of images;

decoding the coded data acquired from the external recording medium;

making an index image of the plurality of images based on the data at the first level of hierarchical encoding on the plurality of images; and

acquiring data at a second level of hierarchical encoding for each of the plurality of images after data acquisition of the data at the first level of hierarchical encoding is completed and during decoding of the data at the first level of hierarchical encoding outputting of the index image, wherein the first level includes a lower resolution than the second level.

10.   (Previously Presented) The image processing method according to claim 9, wherein the first level of hierarchical encoding is the lowest level.

11.   (Canceled)

12.   (Currently Amended) The image processing method according to claim 9, further comprising:

~~making an index image on the plurality of images based on the data at the~~

~~first level of hierarchical encoding on the plurality of images;~~

receiving an instruction by a user to make an index; and

activating the making of the index image when instructed by the user after

data acquisition of the data at the first level of hierarchical encoding is completed.

13.   (Canceled)

14.   (Previously Presented) The image processing method according to

claim 12, further comprising displaying a state of data acquisition of the coded data

divided by the levels of hierarchical encoding.

15.   (Currently Amended) A computer readable recording medium which

records an image processing program for acquiring coded data of a plurality of

images from an external recording medium, wherein the coded data is hierarchically

encoded data of the plurality of images, the program comprising:

acquiring the coded data first only at a first level of hierarchical encoding from

the external recording medium over the plurality of images;

decoding the coded data acquired from the external recording medium;

<u>making an index image of the plurality of images based on the data at the first</u>

<u>level of hierarchical encoding on the plurality of images;</u> and

acquiring data at a second level of hierarchical encoding for each of the

plurality of images after data acquisition of the data at the first level of hierarchical

encoding is completed and during ~~decoding of the data at the first level of~~

~~hierarchical encoding~~ <u>outputting of the index image</u>, wherein the first level includes a

lower resolution than the second level.

16.   (Previously Presented) The computer readable recording medium

according to claim 15, wherein the first level of hierarchical encoding is the lowest

level.

17.   (Canceled)

18.   (Previously Presented) The computer readable recording medium

according to claim 15, the program further comprising:

~~making an index image on the plurality of images based on the data at the~~

~~first level of hierarchical encoding on the plurality of images;~~

receiving an instruction by a user to make an index; and

activating the making of the index image when instructed by the user after

data acquisition of the data at the first level of hierarchical encoding is completed.

19.   (Canceled)

20.   (Previously Presented) The computer readable recording medium

according to claim 18, the program further comprising displaying that an image can

be printed after data at the second level of hierarchical encoding is acquired for the

image, and of outputting the image based on the data acquired on the image when

instructed by a user.

21.   (Previously Presented) The computer readable recording medium according to claim 18, the program further comprising displaying a state of data acquisition of the coded data divided by the levels of hierarchical encoding.

22.   (Previously Presented) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the coded data is compressed data.

23.   (Previously Presented) The image processing method according to claim 9, wherein the coded data is compressed data.

24.   (Previously Presented) The computer readable recording medium according to claim 15, wherein the coded data is compressed data.

25.   (New) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a user interface which, after data acquisition of the data at the first level of hierarchical encoding is completed, notifies a user that an index image is possible.

26.   (New) The image processing method according to claim 9, further comprising, after data acquisition of the data at the first level of hierarchical encoding is completed, notifying a user that an index image is possible.

27.   (New) The computer readable recording medium according to claim 15, the program further comprising, after data acquisition of the data at the first level

of hierarchical encoding is completed, notifying a user that an index image is

possible.